

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK IN VIRGINIA RECOGNIZES THE DEDICATION
OF VIRGINIA'S EMS PROVIDERS AND FOCUSES ON FIRST RESPONDER WELLNESS**

May 19 - 25 is National EMS Week

(RICHMOND, Va.) – Every day, someone suffers a medical emergency that requires help from Virginia's EMS providers. There is comfort in knowing that the most qualified EMS providers will respond to that call for help and provide the best prehospital emergency care available. Last year, EMS providers responded to more than 1.56 million calls for help in Virginia, representing more than 4,200 incidents per day.

As proclaimed by Governor Ralph Northam, May 19 - 25, 2019, is EMS Week in Virginia. This special week honors EMS responders' commitment to providing quality emergency medical care and services to the community while focusing on provider health and wellness. EMS for Children Day, May 22, emphasizes the pediatric patient and the specialized treatment required when providing care for them.

"I continue to be inspired by the hard work and dedication of Virginia's EMS providers," said State Health Commissioner M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA. "The Commonwealth has one of the most robust and effective EMS systems in the nation, which helps to further our goal of making Virginia the healthiest state in the nation. Many thanks and appreciation go to the qualified EMS providers who serve and protect the health of all people in Virginia."

"During EMS Week, it's important to recognize the courageous and devoted EMS providers who are ready to respond to a call for help, anytime, anywhere. Virginia's EMS providers take care of the health and safety of their patients, so it's imperative that we focus on our providers' well-being too," said Gary Brown, director of the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS. "This line of work is not easy and can carry a burden and stress like no other. That's why we want our first responders to know that if they are ever in need of help, we have provider mental health and wellness resources available at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/makethecall. I share my heartfelt thanks and admiration to all of Virginia's EMS providers for their continued commitment to saving lives, and ask them to make it a priority to take care of their own health."

Many Virginia EMS agencies will host a variety of community activities, including first aid classes, health and safety fairs, open houses, fundraisers and more. These family-friendly events encourage citizens to meet and greet the first responders in their neighborhoods.

To honor Virginia's fallen firefighters and EMS personnel, the annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service will be held June 1 at noon at the Richmond International Raceway. Fire and EMS Memorial Week will take place the first week in June and recognizes firefighters and EMS responders who died in the line of duty and those who risk their lives daily to serve and protect Virginians.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/.

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